



**U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement**

March 28, 2005

News Release

ICE ARRESTS ILLEGAL ALIEN AT NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

Man indicted for possession and use of false documents, lying to government

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa—An illegal alien arrested by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) special agents at the Duane Arnold Energy Center Nuclear Power Plant in Palo, Iowa, made an initial appearance in federal court today after being criminally indicted Tuesday.

Gerardo Gallegos-Estrada, 31, a citizen of Mexico, was indicted in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Iowa on the following charges: four counts of possessing fraudulent documents, two counts of using fraudulent documents to obtain employment, and one count of making false statements to the federal government.

If convicted, he faces up to 10 years' imprisonment on each count charging possession of fraudulent documents; up to five years' imprisonment on each count alleging he used the documents to gain employment; and up to five years' imprisonment for making false material statements. In addition, Gallegos-Estrada could be fined up to \$250,000 on each count. As an illegal alien, Gallegos-Estrada is also subject to deportation.

"Our nation's security depends on controlling access to sensitive areas like nuclear power plants," said Acting Resident Agent-in-Charge Eric Spalding of the Cedar Rapids ICE office. "Fraudulent documents enable people to establish false identities. With new identities, criminals and even terrorists could gain access to critical infrastructure areas such as power and water plants, airports and military bases. ICE considers fraudulent documents to be a national security priority."

Gallegos-Estrada was among several workers who had been hired by Duane Arnold Energy Center (DAEC) to perform pipe insulation work in the nuclear power facility. While conducting security procedures as part of the hiring process, DAEC uncovered discrepancies in documents presented by Gallegos-Estrada and contacted the FBI, who in turn contacted ICE. An ICE special agent arrested Gallegos-Estrada at the plant March 18, and later determined that he was in the United States illegally.

Assistant United States Attorney Richard Murphy of the United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Iowa is prosecuting the case.

Gallegos-Estrada's arrest is part of ICE's ongoing commitment to ensure that workers at the nation's nuclear power plants are legally authorized for employment. **Operation Glow Worm** is a nationwide joint operation led by ICE and the Department of Energy to screen the workforce at the nation's 104 nuclear power plants. Investigations have been completed at 56 nuclear plants, including the Duane Arnold Energy Center Nuclear Power Plant, and 1,005 affiliated employers have been inspected, with audits of 64,835 employees having been completed.

Nuclear power plants are one of several "critical infrastructure" industries that receive heightened attention from ICE. In October, ICE special agents with the Cedar Rapids office arrested nine illegal aliens after they attempted to enter the Department of Defense's Iowa Army Ammunition Plant in Middletown, Iowa. All nine were prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Iowa for possessing fraudulent documents. All nine have pleaded guilty and have been turned over to ICE for removal to Mexico.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.